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June 29, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Presque Isle County Development Commission and the Presque Isle County Economic Development Corporation, I would like to lend my support to the continued operation of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. In addition, I would like to see the boundaries of the preserve extended to encompass the waters of Lake Huron off Presque Isle and Rogers City.

Since its inception, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary has greatly added to the economic base of the Alpena area. The increased interest in this area by sport divers has also resulted in an increase in diving activities outside the preserve, including sites located off Presque Isle and Rogers City. In addition, the exhibits located at the Sanctuary headquarters have become a destination for visitors to the area.

This area has, throughout its history and continuing to this day, depended upon the Great Lakes for a great deal of its economic livelihood. Whether in the form of commercial shipping, pleasure boating, sailing, commercial or sport fishing, or sport diving, the waters off Northeast Michigan continue to provide essential economic benefit to its adjacent cities, towns and villages. I firmly believe that including more of those waters in the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary will have significant beneficial effects for this area.

Thank you for your consideration of this suggestion.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Cercone  
Executive Director  
Presque Isle County Development Commission/  
Economic Development Corporation